

Mayor's Column for the September 22, 2010 Review

Celebrating Connections

On the Sunday afternoon of Labor Day weekend, John and I and our daughter and son-in-law attended the 38th annual block party for the 2600 block of North 89th Street in Wauwatosa. It was our old neighborhood prior to moving to Evansville.

We made the decision to attend the party this summer while chatting with old neighbors at the wedding reception of our daughter's life-long best friend, also an "89th Street Kid." We calculated that we have attended 21 of the 38 annual picnics.

The old neighborhood is strategically located two blocks from one of the Wauwatosa public elementary schools and two blocks from Christ King Catholic School. The block was overflowing with kids. I recall that one year we determined that there were 29 children from birth through college age living in eleven houses on the block; the remaining five houses were owned by retirees/seniors who were cherished by the neighbors. As an only child, our daughter viewed people in the neighborhood as extended family.

For the kids, the block party was as much fun as Christmas. The street was barricaded early in the afternoon and the kids ruled. The fun included bike riding, football tossing, pogo stick jumping, hide and seek, chalk drawing, volleyball, and sparklers. The day's high point was the appearance of Mrs. Schmiedlin's buttery, paper-thin sugar cookies. She would bring them out of her house in a very large glass jar, the kids trailing behind her like she was the Pied Piper. They were devoured in minutes.

For several years there were closely supervised backyard campouts for the little ones, with s'mores, popcorn, games, scary stories, and Mrs. Richer's yummy home-made doughnuts in the morning. Fantastic childhood memories were made!

The block remained vibrant during the week. There were several stay-at-home moms that volunteered at the schools as room mothers, scout leaders, PTO volunteers, and reading aides. The retirees anchored the block.

As we enjoyed the recent party, I was struck by the enduring make up of the neighborhood. A new generation of kids was enveloped in safety, security, and caring. The camaraderie and connections provide continuing neighborhood strength.

The Evansville High School Class of 1970 will celebrate our 40th class reunion on Homecoming weekend. We have held a reunion every five years since graduation. We also celebrated with other 1970s classes at the 7-07-07 reunion. 1970 class members also gathered early this year with community, friends, and family to celebrate life with classmate Russ Hrdlicka. Russ has subsequently died of cancer.

I did not feel that as a class we were particularly close during our school years, but as we gather every five years, we have grown close, sharing our lives and continuing to build connections that bind us together.

Similarly, our families provide strength in our lives, with daily experiences and activities, special celebrations like birthdays, weddings, and family reunions, and unconditional love and caring.

Today, the tension, worry, uncertainty, and frustration of citizens are high. We all feel and are aware of it. It is a time to take strength and keep strength in families, neighborhoods, and friendships. Our relationships provide color and vibrancy in our lives. Our connections can keep us grounded and balanced even in challenging times. Celebrate and cherish your connections.

Discover Wisconsin and Marketing Update

Here are some of the reports I received of visitors in our community recently, some particularly for the Harvest Windmill Festival. People from West Bend explored Evansville early in the week of the Festival prior to returning with friends for the Festival.

A woman from Rockford spent two Saturdays in Evansville. The week before the Festival, she spent nearly an hour at Allen Creek Gallery studying art offerings. She returned during the Festival and made several art purchases. The Gallery enjoyed a surge of visitors during the Festival.

A Neillsville couple enjoyed an afternoon of polka in Evansville. Uncle Ozzie played at their wedding in 1960.

Visitors from Champaign, Illinois, learned of our festival in "Midwest Living" magazine. There were additional Illinois visitors using our self-guided walking tour guides strolling through the historic district on Sunday. Other visitors came from St. Paul, Lake Forest, Manitowoc, Watertown, Madison, and Janesville.

150 people enjoyed trolley tours and 50-75 individuals learned about early Evansville residents at the Maple Hill Cemetery Living History event.

Hundreds of people toured the new-construction house of Double D Builders, located in Capstone Ridge, during the Parade of Homes. Much material promoting our community was distributed at the home.

Evansville Energy Update

Northern Power replaced a component in the nacelle of the wind turbine early last week. They indicated to City Hall that the only other time the part has failed in one of their

turbines was after a lightning event. They suspect this part was likely damaged in the earlier lightning storm.

Evansville received a WPPI Energy “Leading by Example” Award, in recognition of community energy leadership, at WPPI’s 30th annual meeting in Green Bay last week. Alderman and Water & Light Committee member Jim Brooks was in attendance to accept the award on our behalf.

The Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence asked Evansville to represent the 2009 Pilot Wisconsin Energy Independence Communities at the Milwaukee Solar Decade Conference at the Frontier Airlines Center (formerly Midwest Express Center) on September 29. A panel including U.S. Department of Energy, City of Milwaukee, City of Madison, and Evansville representatives will discuss moving forward renewable resources in municipalities. I have been asked to make a ten minute presentation on development and early implementation of our 25 x 25 energy independence plan.

Community Announcements

If you plan to participate in the Clean Sweep hazardous waste disposal event on October 8 at the Evansville Public Works Garage, you must pre-register. Information on accepted waste and a registration form are available on the City of Evansville website, www.ci.evansville.wi.gov, at City Hall during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and on the Rock County website at www.co.rock.wi.us.

Leaf pick-up will begin in mid-October and continue until Thanksgiving, weather permitting. The last yard waste collection for the year will occur the week of October 4-8.

On October 1, Eager Free Public Library will hold a Read-Out. Citizens can sign up for 10-15 minute slots to read aloud in the Library from a banned or challenged book. Book lists are available at the library or on-line at www.ala.org.

Eager Free Public Library will host a Hispanic Festival on Saturday, October 9, from 1-3 p.m. Music will be provided by Madison’s Sonidos Suavis.

This year’s One Book One Town community read selection is “Like Water for Chocolate” by Laura Esquivel. Copies can be obtained at the library.

14 South Artists Fall Studio Art Tour will be held this weekend, September 25-26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Evansville headquarters for the tour, Allen Creek Gallery at 137 East Main Street, has studio and artist information.

Evansville Congratulations/Thanks

Evansville congratulates and thanks Partners in Prevention-Rock County and the BASE (Building A Better Evansville) Coalition for receiving a federal Drug Free Mentoring

Program grant. The grant will fund a full-time project coordinator for BASE, a collaborative group of concerned citizens dedicated to decreasing dangerous behaviors of our youth by shifting community culture and behaviors.

Evansville thanks Minnie Moll for her generous donation of an iPod Shuffle to AWARE in Evansville. Minnie won the iPod at the recent Youth Center Open House. Minnie is a great example of the many Evansville students who contribute to making our community a better place.